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584 It has also happened, as Sara recalled, that the two lovers
593 decided to elope, that they renounced any kind of marriage celebration, and that they remained away from their parents until they no longer feared reproach. Even if a child should be subjected to threats, he would find sufficient support from close relatives against the inadmissible interference of parents, if only he [604] does not become intimidated and stands his ground. It is the special duty of the uncle to help so that every young person who wishes to marry is permitted to make an absolutely free decision. In [624] case the uncle's influence on the parents does not bring results, he can even influence public opinion against them if they restrict their child's freedom of choice. All opposition dissolves [583] automatically when the young couple has a child to be cared for. Thus, a person who must fear the disapproval or resistance of parents toward a marriage elopes with his partner; once the couple is blessed with one or two children, no one can interfere or separate them.

587 /645/ A woman who becomes a man's second wife also has unrestricted freedom of choice. If she is a widow, she must sometimes be glad if a man will take her, whether she likes him or not, and she suppresses her own wishes without a murmur. Her position is more favorable if an older man, whose wife has perhaps become incapable of working, woos her. From the start she can then secure for herself certain rights and a favorable position in the family. In the great majority of polygamous marriages the two 585 women are sisters (21); the second one to be taken by the man is

21. This custom may be verified in Bridges' (i):21 words: "When a man married more wives than one they were generally sisters, which fact tendered greatly to strengthen the family party" /cited in English/. Relationship by marriage as such does not constitute blood relationship, hence does not hinder marriage (p. 417).

thus frequently better situated in many respects than in a monogamous marriage.

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587 Gertie lost her first husband, who was killed on an otter hunt. Immediately her brother-in-law sent away his wife and took Gertie. When he died, she joined Chris with whom she is still living. The latter had lost his first wife to a Tuuk in Ushuaia. If a widow runs after her brother-in-law, it is impossible for him to get rid of her, even if he is married.

[594] In Yamana economy it is almost impossible for a widow to maintain herself alone. Hence she cannot long remain unmarried, and she herself is compelled to try to remarry. This is obvious in the complete meaning of the word kwimen, and BD:226 states it fully: "A woman lately a widow, taken as a wife by another" /cited in English/. Usually a man soon proposes to her, for a young, able widow accomplishes more and is more valuable to him than a girl who is still inexperienced. I was assured that a widower had an even greater right to his recently widowed sister-in-law, namely, that he may force her to marry him, and that he can even take the recalcitrant one by the hair and drag her into his hut. Although this right is granted, a man has scarcely ever made use of it, for he must consider the fact that such a refractory sister-in-law will run away from him at the first opportunity. A widow, however, cannot actually coerce her brother-in-law into marrying her, and even less when he is already married. To be sure he can never evade the duty of taking care of his half-orphaned nephews and nieces in one way or another, if they are not provided for elsewhere.

587 607 In general, persons related by marriage show a certain deference and mutual respect for each other. On this account the brother-in-law and widowed sister-in-law who have married are consciously respectful toward each other during the first few months. They talk remarkably little and always very softly.

587 736 •585 Thus, since a married man has the right and a certain obligation to care for his widowed sister-in-law, no one disapproves if he lets her come into his hut as his second wife. She must be /648/ economically secure and have no interference in making a free choice. This is the more comprehensive and final meaning of the obligation toward widow-marriage. It is even more important that the half-orphans be well cared for and properly reared under all circumstances (28).

28. The obligation of the levirate is partly

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responsible for the fact that many husbands have a second wife, and that many younger men are married to an older widow who has brought him the children of her deceased husband.

6. Participation of the Relatives

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The paternal uncle, inâbrowa, unmistakably occupies a privileged position regarding his nephews and nieces. This is clearly evident at the time of the death of his married brother, as well as during his nephew's courtship and marriage. In the above lines we have already given a few data on the position of other adults relative to the marital plans of young people.

Following the dictates of his own heart, the young lad goes courting and tries to win the girl who promises to fulfill all his desires. The young lovers meet as often as possible, and their mutual affection grows as time goes on. If there is no pressure of outside circumstances, they amuse themselves in their amorous play without thinking of marrying soon. In their innermost conviction they have long since decided that they wish to belong together for life, without, however, expressing this openly to each other. And why should they? For the time being, neither of them reveals his feelings and intentions to his own parents; "they are somewhat ashamed!" I was told. A male neighbor and a female friend finally get the boy and girl to speak by making intimate allusions.

After the clandestine meetings and the love affair that can no longer be concealed have lasted long enough for the adults, the paternal uncle, inâbrowa, one day decides to approach the boy very directly: "You have been meeting this girl for some time now. I finally ought to talk to your father about it!" Or he says: "We cannot go on seeing you daily with your beloved much longer. I shall soon inform your father in case you want to marry her!" This and similar expressions voice the wish of the older relative to help the boy attain his goal. The latter realizes it. He takes this opportunity and has his uncle put the proposition before his father. Sometimes, if a boy wishes to reach his goal

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587 As we implied earlier, relationship by marriage is not regarded as blood relationship among our Yamana. It is no obstacle to marriage and, under certain conditions, is even an obligation for a levirate marriage. If the sister-in-law becomes a widow, the oldest brother, in terms of years, of her deceased husband must care for her and her children, provided a younger brother does not obtrude. The wife of the brother-in-law in question may not legally oppose this marriage, nor would either of these two be permitted to reject the widow because of the many children she brings with her (p. 412).

585 Aside from the obligation to take the widowed sister-in-law in marriage, the principle mentioned above is also clearly seen in 837 an occasional marriage of two sisters simultaneously to one and the same man (26). A direct development usually leads to this

26. Hahn (a):305 summarizes both instances in the single sentence: "A man may marry two sisters and the wife of his brother" /translated from French/. Cooper:165, drawing on various sources, concludes: "It is a common practice among both the Ona and Yahgans for a man to marry two sisters" /cited in English/. Bridges (b):230 gives the following reason for this: "When a man marries more than one woman, the wives are usually sisters, which tends to strengthen the bonds of the family" /translated from Spanish/. This way of expressing it sounds credible and is close to what actually happens; this is less true of the statement he made 17 years earlier: "Polygamy is very general, and men generally have sisters of their wives, one sister after another as they become marriageable being given to the same husband" /cited in English/ (MM:III, 117;1869).

situation. When the married sister takes in her unmarried sister to help with the work or to be her companion, /831/ the brother-in-law not infrequently also falls in love with her. Sooner or later he will become intimate with her and will finally have sexual intercourse with her. Hence, he must ultimately acknowledge her as

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595 837 his wife. Their marriage takes place without any formality, and the sexual relations between them become known to the neighborhood at the latest when pregnancy is well advanced, if not long before. If the man has no valid reason for this step and is guided merely by sensuality, he must be prepared for the bitter reproach and biting irony of his neighbors, intended to censure severely his weakness of character. Marriage with two sisters is not forbidden, but public opinion demands a reason for it, such as that the first wife cannot do her work because she is ill or that she has been blessed with a great many children. She perhaps had invited her sister into the hut as a helper, and since the latter adjusted well, the lawful wife will finally, on her own initiative, propose to her husband that he likewise regard her sister, who is probably always younger, as his wife. This is one way in which polygamy arises. Sometimes, also, consideration for the still unmarried sister-in-law will lead to it, for if she has become accustomed to her brother-in-law over a period of time, she will not look for another man, but will wait for her brother-in-law's proposal, or she will force herself upon him so insistently that he will yield to her wish. Her sister may not even be in favor of it.

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587 Closely related to this is the view that, upon the death of his wife, a man has a certain right to his unmarried sister-in-law. If he proposes to her, she probably always accepts. If she refuses, however, and he nevertheless wants her, he may bring her into his hut by force. This is known as kuśatuku. This happens very rarely, however, for everyone knows that a woman who follows a man only because she is forced to do so cannot be held permanently.

Economic conditions in Tierra del Fuego make it imperative for every adult to marry, hence widowed persons (pp. 413, 480) do not remain alone very long. This sometimes leads to a considerable difference in age between the two partners, which does not constitute an obstacle to marriage and is apparently not even regarded as improper. An active young woman is more useful to an older widower than a woman as old as he is. For her part, the young creature expects to be treated with understanding by a quiet old man. From both sides, therefore, gentle pressure is exerted for the marriage of an old widower with a young woman(27).

27. It is an exaggeration, however, when

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604 custom grants the real parents. If the young woman should have the misfortune of having to seek help against infractions or cruel treatment by her husband, she first turns to her blood brother and then to her uncle.

581 In principle, the couple are united in marriage for life.
593 Their marriage is not only a union of hearts, but also a union of work for the welfare of themselves and their children. Each of the two partners is assigned particular duties by ancient custom; it alone decides if and when the dissolution of a marriage is permissible. Unfortunately, the modern age has also changed the
[77] original /663/ form of marriage in families of today, so that it is only partly recognizable in its outward appearance; hence the information given by all the old people was particularly valuable to me.

1. Monogamy

114 In describing the marital arrangements and family customs
● 595 of the Yamana, the critic is faced with a difficult problem. The reports of earlier observers are often quite inadequate and in part clearly colored. In particular, the statements Bridges made about our Indians are consistently unfavorable to them, and his conscious or unconscious intention to show them in an unfriendly light can probably not be denied. The older reports from his pen are in a disparaging and disdainful vein. Later he had enough feeling for justice to correct some of his grossest errors. Other travelers, however, in describing things which they did not directly understand, leaned on Bridges, and this was especially true in the case of arrangements dealing with marriage and the family. This is why there is so much agreement and similarity of opinion among the writers. I personally no longer found the genuine form of married life among the Yamana of earlier times to be a common condition and was obliged to rely on the reports of trustworthy people, such as old Alfredo, during my second visit to Tierra del Fuego. Since their opinions were well founded, they at any rate counteract many false, unsubstantiated contentions.

Many of the earlier travelers maintain that the Yamana condone polygamy, but one cannot clearly tell from their words whether

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this arrangement was prevalent, generally approved, or only tolerated under certain conditions (45). Bridges obviously contra-

45. Cooper:166 has assembled a few more recent opinions. We might also add Furlong (b):131, Dabbene (b):179, Lothrop (b):163, Outes (g):55, and others.

dicts himself. After he had spent the first decade on Isla Keppel, he wrote: "Polygamy is very general. Thus Jemmy Button has three sisters for his wives..., in fact, the marriage of two or three sisters by the same man is not the exception but the rule" /cited in English/ (MM:III, 117;1869). For the time being, let us disregard the last-mentioned inaccuracy (46). Seventeen years

46. Eleven years previously, on December 10, 1858, Despard had long since corrected this false accusation: "Jemmy Button declared that the report of his having three wives was all stories. 'No, I got only two -- other woman my sister'" /cited in English/ (VP:VI, 129;1859). Only after he let his first wife go did he take the second one.

later he (h):206, consciously or unconsciously, makes a considerable qualification: "In some places the rule is to have one wife; in others many have two, some three, and up to four" /translated from Spanish/. At that time Bridges did not know a large part of the Yamana, and for this reason alone his assertion has little credibility. Finally, after another seven years /664/ he (k):234 makes an almost frank revelation which seems like a refutation of his earlier opinions. He confesses: "But when one came to know them [los Yaganes] well, it was discovered that they were neither cannibals nor polygamists, and that, in general, they respected the rights that arise from family life" /translated from Spanish/. It took long years of observation on his part until he properly understood the obvious and significant arrangement of a Fuegian marriage in its actual form.

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114 Previously Bridges had doubtless made the error, into which
595 other Europeans before and after him had fallen, of regarding
592 every adult woman in a hut or in a canoe as the wife of the man who happened to be present. The sister-in-law who, with her sister, was staying with her brother-in-law was not always his wife, nor was this the case with an older woman who, because she was alone, had been taken into the family by him. The same applies to relatives who happened to be living together for a time. A few years before this, in March, 1864, Stirling had reported: "The custom of the people here [in Packsaddle Bay] is to have but one wife; at Woolya a man often has three wives" /cited in English/ (VSA:XI,239;1864). Is it not possible that a false observation dictated these last words?

114 Hyades (q):378, however, very definitely represented the
595 view that monogamy predominates: "Although there is quite a number of men who have two, three, and even four wives, the custom is nevertheless to have only one" /translated from French/ (47).

> 47. He is consistent in this opinion and says in another place that "polygamy...is permitted but not the rule" /translated from French/. Lothrop (b):163 did not form an opinion and repeats, following Bridges, "the number [of wives] was not fixed by custom" /cited in English/.

Martial:198 agrees with him, saying: "The Fuegians sometimes practice polygamy; they rarely have three and even four wives; sometimes two, more often one" /translated from French/. Dabbene (b):188 emphasizes: "It is the custom to have only one [wife]" /translated from Spanish/. On the basis of the opinions of a few travelers of the last decades, Cooper:166 came to the following conclusion: "As Mr. Bridges and the members of the French Cape Horn expedition had much more experience among the Yahgans than had the members of the Italo-Argentinian expedition, it is more probable that the former authorities' estimate is the truer one, namely, dominant monogamy with, however,
595 considerable polygamy" /cited in English/. Present conditions

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595 are not a criterion, although all families are monogamous. A decade ago, Manuel (p.444) from sheer necessity, was the sole exception. Along with his first wife, he took the youthful Julia, a Halakwulup.

The oldest men and women, questioned independently of one another, were and are unanimous in the opinion that monogamy by far outweighed polygamy, and that the latter was tolerated as an exception. The two brothers Martin and Fred Lawrence repeated this verbatim and gave as the reason a few obvious circumstances. /665/ The number of adults of both sexes was more or less even. If the majority of the people had lived in polygamy, a considerable number of men would have remained unmarried, and every stranger would necessarily have noticed this. According to his natural inclination, the Fuegian man gives himself to only a single woman, and he feels that it disturbs his emotional life if he is supposed to give his love to two women at the same time. For this reason one of the wives of a polygamist will stand very low in his estimation. To say that he is economically better off [556] with a second wife, as long as his wife is still well and able to work, is a misunderstood exaggeration, for no one gathers riches and certain tasks imposed upon a man by ancient tribal customs are largely doubled if he has two wives whom he must support along with the children.

My attention was duly called to a popular erroneous manner of speaking among Indians and Whites, according to which a man is called a polygamist when he has sent his first wife away and has taken another woman in her place. Actually, these two women did not live in his hut simultaneously, but the first was superseded by the second. It happened relatively often among our natives that a husband dissolved his tie with the first wife and in her place took another as his wife (48). Monogamous

48. It is only in this sense that Lothrop (b):163 accepts the term "polygamy," for he writes: "In fact the Yahgan showed a tendency to change husbands and wives not infrequently, which we may term 'progressive polygamy'" /cited in English/.

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595 single marriage is, after all, the general rule among the Yamana. It has often been proved that the rare cases of polygamy are necessarily tolerated only as exceptions.

2. Polygamy

Polygamy among our Fuegians has justifiably been put down as a fact by several travelers and missionaries. This confirms my personal investigations. Some accounts apparently take pleasure in increasing the number of joint wives of a man. Thus Outes (g):58, for example, says: "The poor have two or three wives, but there are some with four, five, and even six" /translated from Spanish/ (49). To this I wish only to say that everyone knows

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49. Even this view is topped by Spegazzini (a):166, namely, that it is not rare "to find some youth who has four and up to five wives" /translated from Spanish/.

there are neither poor people nor rich people among the Yamana.

More reliable accounts limit themselves to the bare statement that polygamy is permitted. In Hyades (b):1346 we read simply: "Polygamy, which custom permits, seemed nevertheless to be the exception" /translated from French/ (50). In February,

50. In another place he says (p):334: "Polygamy is permitted."

1930, Alfredo told me clearly and definitely: "While it is true that a Yamana may take a second woman along with his actual wife, the great majority of our men have always been satisfied with a single one!" Neither /686/ he nor his wife remembered a single native who had lived with three women at the same time. Relative figures are never cited, and the following communication by Bridges, dated February 14, 1871 (MM:V,138;1871), about the 21 men and youths present in Ushuaia does not fill me with confidence. He says that of these, four were bachelors, seven had one

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595 wife each, five had two each, three had three each, and one even had four wives (51). A case of more than two wives, if it actually

51. In contrast to this assertion, I refer again to the decisive correction which Bridges (k):243 made in his own judgments of earlier years, when he says: "But when one came to know them [los Yahganes] well, it was discovered that they were neither cannibals nor polygamists" /translated from Spanish/. With these words he curtly denies any kind of polygamy; in doing so, however, he obviously slightly oversteps the bounds of reality.

happened, must at least be regarded as a rare exception (52). It

52. This automatically settles the preposterous assertion of Bove (e):157 and (g):234: "Although... a man takes as many wives as he pleases, one nevertheless seldom sees men with more than four wives." His traveling companion, Lovisato, of course repeats with him that "a man takes from one to five wives and without any ceremony" /translated from Italian/.

would be more accurate to reject many of these accounts as false observations, for, as we have already emphasized (p. 437), not every woman in the company of a man was therefore his wife. Nevertheless, it seems that one must grant this fact, at least for modern times. BD:573 mentions tuxlöisa, "to marry more wives than two" /cited in English/. The two Lawrence brothers definitely dismissed the idea that in earlier, ordered conditions a Yamana might have been married to three or more wives simultaneously. 595 On another occasion, in February, 1923, Fred told me: "Anyone 587 who is familiar with the Yamana manner of speaking knows that they also speak of two or three wives of a man who has taken two or three women successively, in other words, another one

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595 in place of the one who ran away, was dismissed, or died. Such
587 a man cannot be called a polygamist in the strict sense of the word. Besides, a Yamana really has enough with two wives!" The explanation deserves to be carefully noted.

595 A Fuegian should not have more than one wife from free
586 choice, as can be seen from the fact that the feeling of the general public demands a definite and fundamental reason for taking a second spouse. If incompatability or serious alienation develops between married people, they ultimately separate. If after that some man takes a second woman as his wife, he does so for purely external reasons.

595 Almost always it is a question of incapacity to work on her part or a physical ailment of long duration. Modern times have brought about the latter condition. In view of the prevailing division of labor among the married Yamana, the man is absolutely dependent upon the unimpaired energy of his marital partner. If she must stop working for even a short time, she herself provides a substitute for him by summoning her sister, aunt, or niece. This state of affairs could not go on permanently. For example, if a wife has broken an arm or /667/ leg, she needs extra help, besides being unable to perform her customary work. As soon as she is aware of her hopeless condition, she voluntarily advises her husband to marry another woman. The man now has a true right to a second wife (53). Her still unmarried sister may

53. Dabbene (b):189 also grants it to him: "The man has a right to take another wife if the one he has is already old or if some misfortune leaves her with a serious physical defect" /translated from Spanish/. Spegazzini (a): 166 expressed himself in the same vein.

have taken over her duties, adjusted well to the brother-in-law, and be on the best of terms with his children. What could be more natural than that this brother-in-law say to her: "Stay with me as my second wife!" She probably always accepts the offer, if only out of pity for her sick sister and for the latter's children. Sometimes if an elderly couple are anxious for a fresh worker, he

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595 will take a healthy girl. This decision is very welcome to many a contentious old woman, because she now has a young creature completely under her domination. Thus she compensates for the fact that he shows more fondness toward the other than toward her. In both instances, the reason for polygamy is evident (54).

54. Different interpretations and descriptions should be corrected on the basis of these principles. According to Bove (e):157, "the necessity for having paddlers for the canoe, as well as a great predilection for the female sex, is the reason for such widespread polygamy. This is doubtless the most effective cause for the impoverishment of that race." The remark by Bridges (e):332 that "bigamy was very prevalent because of the great advantages connected with it" means nothing.

595 837 586 At various times Fred Lawrence repeated to me: "A Yamana never keeps a second woman as his wife, in addition to his first wife, for purely sensual reasons. If his lust is so great, he seeks relief in forbidden ways. If he has become absolutely infatuated with another woman who responds to his intentions, he gets rid of his first wife without further ado in order to be able to live with her alone, undisturbed."

595 In February, 1920, reliable Alfredo explained to me emphatically *in the presence of his own wife and old Julia*, neither of whom contradicted him: "If a Yamana wants to take another person into his hut as a second wife, he does not need to ask his wife about it. But he almost always does so, for he loves his wife!" In other words, a man who has grown tired of his wife prefers to dismiss her before he brings a second wife into his hut without her knowledge. If he nevertheless does so, "his first wife must patiently yield. Perhaps she does not like this living together and she herself finally leaves. But she continues to be tractable and submissive toward the man; she does not call him to account if he foists a rival upon her without her knowledge and against her will." This explanation by Alfredo was later confirmed by other persons.

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595 587 842 The intention of having more children is not a reason for polygamy among the Yamana, for the Indian women are very /668/ fertile, and no one could remember a childless woman in earlier times. Most cases of polygamy arose from the fact that a man who was already living with one or two women also took in a solitary widow, Elftakakipa. The latter perhaps did not find an opportunity for a new marriage with a bachelor or did not wish to return to her family group, and the man took her chiefly because he felt sorry for her. Whether or not he sometimes had intercourse with her, both knew from the start that they could not expect children from their union. Hence, it was actually the right of sanctuary which the husband granted this widow. In the strict sense of the word one cannot call such a life together a marriage.

595 177 In 1920 Walter explained to me how our Yamana must also make allowances for the changes forced on them by European civilization. His father had three women in his hut simultaneously, with whom he had marital relations. At that time there was already a shortage of men on Lennox Island and environs, that is to say, in the eastern group of the Yamana. Hence the women forced themselves on the few men in order to find sanctuary somewhere. From among his many brothers and sisters, Walter had for several years been the only one living. Here is another case. The young Halakwulup, Julia, had fled from a brutal European and found refuge on the farm near Punta Remolino. She could scarcely come to any understanding with the Yamana and lived very much to herself. She was treated in a friendly fashion and was supported by the Indian women there, but as a solitary woman with a son a year old she could no longer make out by herself. There was no suitable Yamana youth who could be her husband. Finally Manuel, who was about 35 years old and was married to fifteen-year-old Emilia, took pity on her and took her into his hut as his second wife (p. 439).

The quiet acceptance of polygamy brings with it the surprising phenomenon that married people are separated by a considerable age difference (36), which is not regarded as an obstacle

36. "An elderly man will be found often to possess two young wives in addition to one his

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> equal in age; while a young man will often be allied to a woman his senior by forty years; for among some of the tribes at least it is inculcated as a duty that the young men should marry -- or, perhaps, it would be more correct to say, should adopt into their family, and undertake to provide for -- the aged women" /cited in English/ (VSA:XIII, 81;1868). Aspinall:270 writes: "strangely enough, the man usually has two wives, an old one and a young one."

to marriage (p. 419). In fact, there are minor advantages if an elderly couple takes a young girl into the hut (p. 442) and if a young bachelor brings home a widow who is middle-aged or older (p. 420). This observation apparently disturbed Stirling on his trip through the Wulaia region in March, 1884: "The elder men have frequently three wives, and two of them are generally of extreme youth....I long for plenary powers to set matrimonial affairs right down here, for the young men are too often glad to pick up derelicts, while their sires adorn their wigwams, and propel /669/ their canoes with the fairest faces, and choicest arms in the community" /cited in English/ (VSA:XI, 204;1864). He said this in the unconsciously erroneous assumption that every woman associated with a man is his wife.

If a married Yamana takes a second woman as an actual wife, *along with his first wife, the formalities which* are the general requirement for a young bridal couple (p. 424) are not repeated, nor are they when a widower, Yifitakuwa, marries again. The situation is taken for granted by the neighborhood when they see these persons living together uninterruptedly in the same hut, if, indeed, the newly married couple have not already announced it in so many words.

The first wife, unmistakably, has a privileged position. Outwardly this is shown by the fact that she is permitted the place directly beside the hut entrance. Alfredo called her wafia; BD: 858 writes wihyfkin, "the first wife whose place is the door side of her husband" /cited in English/. Thus she appears as the

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595 doorkeeper (56), so to speak, for here she also arranges her

56. Martial:198 called her "the door-woman" /translated from French/. Bridges (i):25 wrote in exaggerated detail: "Each grown person had his or her place in the wigwam and the several wives of a man had each her appointed place as respected the seat of her husband, from which she derived her title. Thus the first, or rather principle /sic/ wife, for sometimes the first in respect of time became second or third in respect of rank, was spoken of as Wahyusin, i.e., the one on the doorside, because her place was invariably on that side of her husband. The second was called Ushushpai, because she sat next her husband on the inner side, and third Cuchiellahco, i.e., next beyond on the inner side of. Thus each knew her place when they went into any fresh dwelling, but usually a man had not more than one or two wives at a time" /cited in English/.

sleeping place and the husband has his place beside her. Next to him, on the inner side of the hut, the second wife takes her place; hence she is called ušógupaiaki, who is, according to BD:114, "the second wife, when there are two, because her place was on the upper or inner side of her husband in the wigwam" /cited in English/. Moreover, the first wife is entitled to give the other one certain tasks and other orders. The latter submits, more because she is younger than in acknowledgment of a special greater power of her superior. It never occurs to the first wife to misuse her power, much less to leave her rival in want or to harm her. Just as in general the first wife distributes to the neighboring huts the meat that her husband brings home, so she lets the second wife have a special piece (57). She is particularly attentive,

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57. Hence she is not dependent on the whims of the first wife at every meal, as Martial:198

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595 [564]

maintains. According to the common custom, everyone in a hut may eat what is there and whenever he pleases (p. 334).

from a feeling of common humanity, while the other is nursing an infant. Both of them freely take part in the daily activities. A great deal is automatically regulated by the fact that the younger woman must take care of her small children. In most polygamous marriages the first wife is unable to work or is weak, but in any case the second wife /670/ has more or less all the work in the hut or the canoe. If, as often happens, they are sisters, the daily work runs harmoniously and smoothly.

In some cases, however, the relationship between two wives can be very much disturbed by envy and jealousy, if the two are not related, if the man shows more love and affection for the younger of the two, if he obviously treats her with more friendliness and tenderness. The first wife, who now is clearly aware of her lawful pre-eminence, controls her silent envy for a long time. [578] Later, in regular scenes of jealousy, she seriously reproaches her husband. Finally, if all her efforts to win his love are in vain, she definitely leaves him. Such conditions are the exception in polygamous marriages and probably occur only when the husband wants to get rid of his first wife. The two rivals almost always live together harmoniously, particularly if the older one is dependent on the younger because of physical ailments and even more often if both are sisters. Then neither one is jealous of the demonstrations of affection which the other receives from their common husband, no matter how irritatingly the favoritism is displayed. The first wife never relinquishes her own rights (58).

58. The meaning of kōtuana which SD:188 gives, "to cause the first wife to take the place in the wigwam of the second or third" /cited in English/, has no legal significance.

595 114 Here is an example of how unreliably two Europeans who visited our Fuegians simultaneously reported on one and the same arrangement. According to Spegazzini (1):106, "the peace of

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595 114 the family is never disturbed" through polygamy, "no altercations among [the wives], neither jealousy nor favoritism" /translated from Spanish/. Bove (e):157, on the other hand, maintains: "Although...a man takes as many women (59) as he pleases, one

59. Apparently leaning on Bove, Wieghardt:38 repeats verbatim that "with so many women around [namely, with four wives], domestic felicity disappears entirely" /translated from Spanish/.

nevertheless seldom sees men with more than four wives. It seems that with such a number of wives domestic happiness is no longer secure and the hut or canoe is daily turned into a battlefield, so that a young and beautiful wife probably sometimes pays with her life for the favoritism which the man shows her. It is worse for the man when the women settle their own quarrels and combine against the head of the house, in which case it probably becomes clear to him that even a single woman can at times be very uncomfortable." Faced with the inventive spirit of one who can produce such battle scenes, I for my part remain silent.

595 In spite of everything, it is true that individual men lived simultaneously with two women, for the most part two sisters, but the great majority of marriages were monogamous. A few authorities surmised that, as an extremely rare exception, a man also had three wives, /671/ who were almost always sisters. There is no reliable evidence for this number or for a larger number of wives. There was probably always some reason for polygamous marriages, most of them arising from the existing division of labor and the obligation of the brother-in-law to marry a widow. Most of the European observers erroneously regarded every woman accompanying a man as his wife and hence very much exaggerated the extent of polygamy. Again we should like to remind the reader of the considerable modification that the experienced Bridges (k):243 made in his earlier, hasty assertions, for after living with these Indians for almost 40 years, he frankly confessed: "When one came to know the Yamana well, it appeared that they were neither cannibals nor polygamists!"

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• 575 Nothing indicates that the Yamana would permit actual polyandry (60). So-called sexual promiscuity was already

60. On April 22, 1871, Bridges (i):21 clearly stated: "In no case has a woman been known to have more than one husband at a time, but successively some have had two or even more" /cited in English/, and later he (h):210 repeated: "A woman has never been known to have more than one husband at a time" /translated from Spanish/. Many a married woman, however, secretly had an illicit affair.

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definitely disavowed by Fitz-Roy (a):182: "Jemmy Button often talked of his father, mother, brothers, and sisters, also of uncles and aunts, after he knew enough of our language to understand distinctly the relationship. Now this could not have been the case had not his father and mother lived together permanently as man and wife, according to the clear account which he himself always gave of their custom in this respect" /cited in English/. The Anglican missionaries, beginning with Stirling, endeavored to put an end to polygamy; Bridges even obtained an injunction from the government (61). Unfortunately, the missionaries did

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61. On May 26, 1887, he reported: "Again, cases of natives taking a second wife are punished by imprisonment, and thus happily prevented" /cited in English/ (Mbl:XXI, 176, 1887).

not take into account the fact that in some families a second wife was demanded by economic necessity. As such, however, polygamy is contrary to the general feeling of justice among the Yamana, and reasonable exceptions are merely tolerated (p. 440).

836 tion. Intercourse between the unmarried was disapproved, but breaches of the code were not infrequent. Marriage between blood
582 relatives, however distant, was in theory taboo; in practice, the prohibition included half-siblings, uncle and niece, aunt and nephew, first cousins, both parallel and cross, and seemingly extended somewhat beyond these limits. Since near relatives commonly lived near one another, marriages tended to be locally exogamous. Marriages with mates from far distant localities, especially outside one's own of the five dialectic groups, were disliked and infrequent. Marriage with a mother and her daughter was disapproved, but not so strongly as marriage with near blood-kin. Sponsors were barred from marrying their respective candidates of the *tóktam*[1] initiation rite.

584 Choice of mate was ordinarily free on the part both of the boy and of
583 the girl, and appears to have been based largely on mutual affection and regard. Gifts from the groom to the bride's father were given and expected, as were also certain services before and after marriage. But a bride-price as stipulated by or haggled for by the father was absent. Bride capture or stealing, if it occurred, must have been very rare.

582 Boys and girls did not marry until they had passed through the required *tóktam* initiation. Gusinde (1937, p. 633) estimates the more common chronological ages of first marriages as about 17 to 19 years for boys, and 15 to 16 for girls.

Monogamy was by far the most prevalent form of marriage. Polyandry did not occur. Polygyny was permitted, but was uncommon. A few men had two wives, more commonly sisters; cases of three wives, if they occurred, must have been very rare. On the death of a man's
587 wife, he had a certain marriage claim to her unmarried sister. On the death of a woman's husband, she frequently became, and under certain circumstances was expected or obliged to become, the wife of his oldest surviving brother, especially his unmarried brother, unless she married another man. This custom (*the levirate*) was, from the native point of view, primarily an obligation of the father's brother to be responsible for his nephews and nieces, a responsibility that lay on the uncle even though his brother's widow married another man. A surviving married brother was not entirely free to marry the widow, as his own wife might object.

585 The chief wedding rite consisted in painting the cheeks of the couple with three red parallel horizontal lines. These were worn and renewed for a week, during which time there was feasting and dancing, and at the end of which the couple went off together to their own canoe.
591 Customarily, they remained with the bride's people for a few months,

[1] See the account of Yaghan *tóktam*, 1 of Yaghan *tóktam*.

591 after which they would usually go for good to the groom's kin. Thus, localized groups of kin tended to be paternal.

604 After marriage the husband's paternal uncle and the wife's maternal aunt took particular interest in them, superseding in large measure their respective parents. Children-in-law were expected to
606 look after their parents-in-law in sickness or other needs. Children-in-law observed a number of avoidances regarding their parents-in-law: greeting their parents-in-law, speaking to them or breaking in on their conversation with remarks, looking at them, and sitting down beside them were all taboo. When in the same hut with their parents-in-law, they turned their sides or backs on them. A year or so after marriage, the restrictions between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law were partly, but never wholly, relaxed; those between son-in-law and father-in-law lasted through life. On visits of the father-in-law to his daughter, he and his son-in-law communicated wishes and news through the daughter and wife or by indirect discourse.

562 The man was, in theory, considered the head of the family, with
593 authority to rule. Actually, his authority was very far from absolute, and the woman was largely her own mistress, particularly in such provinces of her own as child rearing, food gathering, and canoe managing. Some men domineered over their wives, but not a few husbands were under the thumbs of their spouses. Some husbands were cruel, but if so they ran afoul of the wife's kin. More generally, woman's position both in the family and in the community seemed a respected one, not that of a drudge, slave, or inferior being, and she enjoyed a fairly high degree of freedom and independence.

684 Adultery was disapproved by the Yahgan code, but apparently
837 the code suffered appreciable infringement in practice. Adultery on the wife's part was, if discovered, punished by the husband with sound beatings, very rarely with death. Public opinion disapproved of her behavior. Adultery on the husband's part also gave rise to domestic battles in which the husband sometimes suffered severe treatment at his offended wife's hands. Jealousy on the part of both
[648] husband and wife was common. Wife lending was absent. There was no professional prostitution; a woman, married or unmarried, of markedly loose character was looked down upon.

586 Separation and divorce were fairly frequent, but were not lightly resorted to. The most common cause appears to have been cruel treatment of the wife by the husband, though there were other causes such as marked laziness, negligence, or crabbedness on the part of the
[648] wife. In case the wife became incapacitated through illness or age,
[659] the man could, and, it seems, more commonly did, take to himself a second wife.

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
SH6 Yahgan SH6

Among the Yahgan, marriage by capture seems to have been less common than among the Ona. A woman given in marriage by her father against her will soon abandoned the undesired husband. In fact the Yahgan showed a tendency to change husbands and wives not infrequently, which we may term progressive polygamy. According to Rev. Thomas Bridges (1884, p. 206) a man might have from one to four wives at a time, but the number was not fixed by custom.

Infidelity resulted in no fixed form of punishment, but both the offending man and woman were apt to be beaten. Shortly before our arrival a Yahgan man had disappeared. It was rumored that his wife, enraged at his amours, had beaten him with a paddle and accidentally killed him.

Children

In the old days, to judge by the number of deserted orphans set down in the mission records, the Yahgan did not greatly devote themselves to the care of the children. Abortion seems to have been a common practice, and infanticide we judge was not rare. To reach the facts is somewhat difficult because early explorers did not have sufficient knowledge to describe such practices, and the mission contact soon put an end to them or drove them under cover.

Soon after birth had taken place the Yahgan mother bathed in the sea and the new-born child was also immersed in order to toughen it. This was a rather terrible ordeal for an infant, for the sea temperatures of winter and summer range from 40° to 50° Fahrenheit, while the air at best could be described as no warmer than temperate. We have no figures to show what mortality this custom entailed, yet cannot but believe that soon after birth all but the most vigorous and robust infants were thus ruthlessly eliminated.

After delivery, not only the mother but the father as well was expected to rest for a week or more. In this custom we see incipient couvade.

Games and Amusements

The Yahgan to pass the time indulged in various simple games and in singing and dancing. Of necessity the young boys devoted much care and time to practice with spear, bow and arrow, sling, and stones; but while these exercises often assumed the form of